

Yakaz

One-Stop Access to Classified Ads Across the Web



Business Needs

- A search platform that could index and provide unified access to millions of online classified advertisements
- A highly automated solution that could operate with minimal resources
- Multilingual support and a replicable model for rapid international expansion
- Quick deployment and an immediate ROI
- Guaranteed freshness of data

Solution Benefits

- Unified access to more than 10 million ads from 10,000 sites in 15 languages
- Fast initial deployment handled 100% by Yakaz's 3-person staff
- Low TCO - 3 commodity servers handle 40 QPS for growing base of 10 million monthly visitors
- Easy replication for 10 country portals
- High ROI - profitability achieved in a few months

About Yakaz

Yakaz is a specialized search engine that uses Exalead CloudView™ to provide unified access to local classified advertisements from websites around the globe. Yakaz enjoys the highest traffic growth among all classified ad sites. This innovative service allows users to filter a comprehensive collection of ads by category (real estate, jobs, used cars, etc.), location, keywords, price and other criteria. Yakaz also locates search results on a map and can send users email updates for recently published classifieds. Yakaz achieved profitability in just a few months, and currently provides unified access to more than 10 million classified ads from more than 10,000 websites through portals in 10 countries across North America, South America and Europe, with plans to continue its global expansion.

Website: www.yakaz.com

Yakaz's Challenge

In 2005, despite the recent collapse of the Internet bubble, two AOL executives, inspired by the success of innovative sites like eBay and Craigslist, decided to launch their own offering in the vertical online classifieds market.

Option 1: Traditional Approach

It was an ambitious project. Creating a traditional online classified ad service from scratch would require a hefty investment in hardware, software and marketing: building an IT infrastructure, developing the site, generating traffic, organizing events, managing updates, etc. What's more, the number of classified ad sites was growing fast. Sites were facing stiffer competition in building audience and attracting and retaining advertisers. At the same time, consumers were becoming increasingly frustrated by the need to visit multiple sites to find and compare offers.

Option 2: A Radical Departure

Against this backdrop, Yakaz's founders decided to take a radical new approach. They would not create a traditional online classifieds site. They had professional experience at AOL with Exalead's technology, and they envisioned a way to leverage the CloudView platform to enable an entirely new kind of classifieds service, one that could intelligently aggregate existing listings from all other websites and present them in a unified, intelligent manner.

Users could then visit a single site to get a comprehensive view of all offerings of interest, and advertisers and advertising sites would benefit from added exposure (clicking on a link in Yakaz results would take users directly to the ad of interest on its 'home' site). It was a winning idea.

From the beginning, CloudView served as an essential brick the project's construction, giving life to the Yakaz vision and value proposition, and enabling the project to go from conception to realization in record time.

Thanks to the flexibility, scalability, and easy administration of Exalead CloudView, Yakaz could concentrate its energy on the internal development and critical building blocks of the project: categorization of free text, heterogeneous recognition of sequences and patterns of classifieds, geographic localization of data by the text and its environment, detection of similarities, web crawlers, etc.

In addition, Yakaz was able to quickly harness the rich functionality of the Exalead technology to develop a new generation of navigational tools that could offer users a unique, simple and intuitive experience.

Selection Criteria

Yakaz's critical requirements were at once functional, technical, and economic. Exalead met all these constraints.

Functional Requirements

- Simple yet rich navigation
- Engaging, interactive user experience
- Uniform presentation of ads regardless of source
- Support for multiple languages
- Geocentric (local) user experience
- Guaranteed reliability and freshness of data

Technical Requirements

- Automated data collection
- Automated normalization of heterogeneous Internet content
- Highly configurable crawling and indexing tools
- Reliable and predictable performance even during traffic spikes
- Robust semantic factory enabling structuring of 'dirty' web data

Economic Requirements

- Controlled TCO and cost efficiency: maximum traffic on a single server
- Adaptable to the specific professional requirements of the Yakaz business model
- Flexible support for creation of new functionalities
- Capacity to evolve to meet future needs for new services
- 24/7 robust availability

"From the beginning, we knew the challenge was complex. Thanks to Exalead CloudView™, we were able to create a new service in only three months and with very limited resources."

Mathurin Ducastelle Co-Founder of Yakaz

The Exalead Choice

The founders of Yakaz had professional experience with Exalead’s search engine as well as with engines from other international software vendors. They were impressed with Exalead’s technology and with the company. “To create our search engine and aggregate a vast volume of classified ads in record time, we needed a technology in which we had complete confidence — one we knew could meet our essential business needs. And as we were in the process of creating an entirely new business, we were looking for a true partner. The availability, enthusiasm, and know-how of the Exalead team really made the difference,” explains Mathurin Ducastelle, Yakaz Co-Founder.

“Yakaz has been able to aggregate, structure and normalize heterogeneous data from across the Web to create an innovative multilingual service at a marginal cost.”

Mathurin Ducastelle
Co-Founder of Yakaz

Deployment

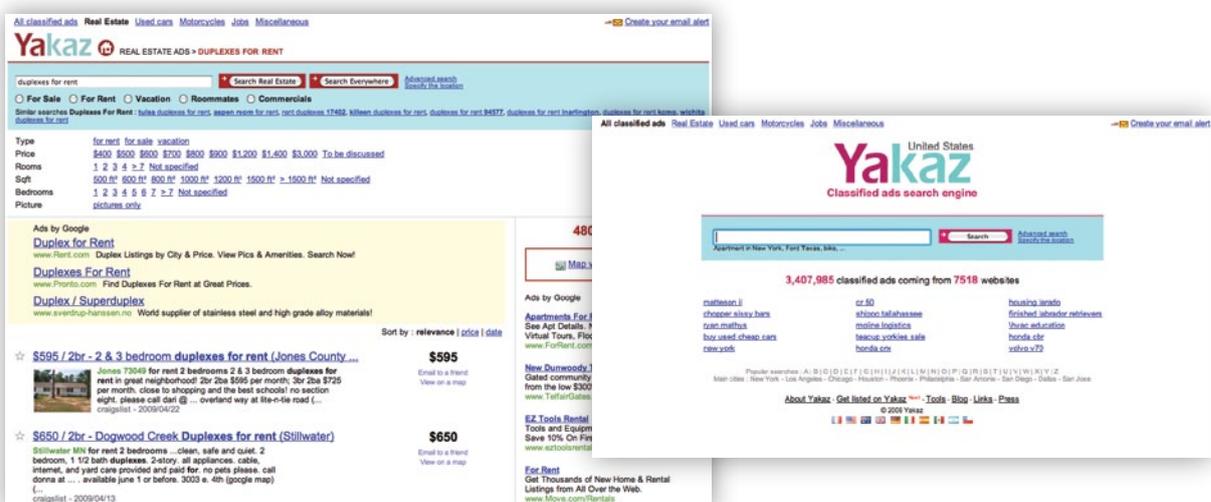
The Yakaz site was developed and deployed in only a few months. The Yakaz team was pleased to discover how easy it was to configure, deploy and manage CloudView. In fact, even with minimal resources, they were able to handle the deployment entirely on their own, with Exalead providing only training and on-call support.

In less than 3 months, the CloudView platform had collected millions of up-to-date listings for the U.S. market, the first market in which Yakaz was launched. The site was an instant success, and with only 3 commodity servers was soon processing 40 queries per second for a base that quickly grew from 1/2 million to 6 million monthly visitors. Yakaz now serves 10 million monthly visitors in 10 countries, with a global, continuously expanding inventory of more than 10 million classified ads drawn from 10,000-plus websites.

The Exalead CloudView solution was capable of enabling Yakaz to very quickly gain momentum: the number of unique visitors per month jumped from 500,000 to 10 million. Today Yakaz is available in 10 countries across North America, South America and Europe, with plans to continue its global expansion.

“With a team of only 10 people, we offer Internet users in 10 countries the most comprehensive classified ad service on the market. We have become a pivotal and profitable company in only a few months. Our partnership with Exalead is the key to our success.”

Mathurin Ducastelle



Yakaz’s Search Interface with Exalead CloudView

The Solution

To set itself apart from other websites, Yakaz focused on creating a unique and satisfying user experience. The company team worked on developing a state-of-the-art interface that would let users discover and explore the deep Yakaz listings simply and naturally. Yakaz provides an instant, comprehensive view of all the available offerings for a given query, then enables the users to hone in the offers of most interest to them with a simple click on price range, color, brand, geographic location, date or other criteria.

Users can locate listings on a map with a tool that combines Exalead search results with a Google Maps service, or they can scan results visually using the Gallery View, which displays ad photos with key data. Users can sort results by relevancy, price, and date. These options make it much easier to compare options and locate the exact product or service one is seeking.

The Response

“The Exalead CloudView solution went above and beyond our expectations,” says Mathurin Ducastelle, Co-Founder of Yakaz. “We’ve expanded our service to several more countries, and we don’t plan to stop there. We’re also working on a white label product for leading national consumer Web portals such as Virgilio in Italy.”

“The richness of the solution has given us the freedom to concentrate on what matters most: the technological developments that are at the heart of our business.”



Contact us to discover for yourself why Exalead is the right search platform to work with your structured and unstructured information. Visit www.exalead.com to learn more.

About Exalead

- E.U. Headquarters, Paris, France - U.S. Headquarters, San Francisco, CA
- Offices in 7 countries
- 250+ customers worldwide
- Founded in 2000 by AltaVista executives

Exalead is a division of Dassault Systèmes, whose 9000 employees and 6000 partners provide 3D based applications, PLM based applications, and Search based applications to more than 115,000 customers in 80 countries.

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